POPERY

Banished,

With an Account of their Base Cheats, especially, making the *Word of GOD* of no Effect. And that their Worship, although contrair to the *Holy Scripture*, they call best.

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Rob. Midgley.

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A TRUE

Character of Popery.

We do not find that God ever owned above two Religions in the World, the one of Ceremonies, the other without. The first dictated to *Moses* by God himself; which tho it consisted of several peculiar Rites, Oblations and Ceremonies, yet was their institution grounded upon Reason, being either Remembrances of their Deliverances, or Types and Significations of the great Sacrifice which was to come, insomuch that God did not require of the Jews to have any other Gods but him, but for a particular Reason.

The second Religion was that which the coequal *Son* of God first taught in *Judea*, and commanded his Disciples to spread over the World. A Religion plain and Simple, and, as I may say, without Welt or Guard, but so full of Truth and Sincerity, so full of vertuous precepts, all tending to make Men happy both in this and the other Life, that it may truly be said to have descended from Heaven, and to have been the untainted Doctrine of a most perfect Deity. Now as no Government can subsist without Religion; we thought our selves the most happy people in the World, when once reform'd, not only to the Protestant Religion, which is that which comes nearest to the Rules of Sacred Institution, but to the most refined Exercise of the protestant Religion, now practis'd in the World; Wherein there is neither Defect of Devotion nor redundances of Superstition, a Decency with Gravity, a Decorum avoiding the Morofeness of a Clownish Behaviour to the Soveraign of Heaven. No *Superstitions* assuming to its self a Sanctity above others, but a piety and charity grounded upon, and warranted by Scripture, without which all Religion is but a seeming, and no true Religion.

For this Reason it was, that the Author of this ensuing paper, a person, of no less piety and Learning than Sharpness of Wit and Soundness of Judgment, wrote with such an Abhorrence as he does of the popish Religion, if it may deserve to be call'd a Religion, as the Gentleman well observes; and that he

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laboured to ſet it forth in its proper Colours, as if he had intended it as his laſt Legacy to this Nation, to ſhew how ruinous it would be to us, ſhould we be again compell'd to imbrace it; and with the Dog be conſtrained to return to our former Vomit: And as it were Prophetically to let us underſtand what a Deliverance GOD has been pleaſed to bleſs us withal, in ſo lately freeing the Kingdom from that Inundation of *Antichriſtian* Pomp and Vanity, and Cheats of *Romiſh Superſtition*, which was about to have overwhelmed it. 'Tis true, the Touches are bold; but it is a Deſcription to the Life: And bold Stroaks in Painting are many times more grateful to the Eye and Maſter-like, than the ſmooth Touches of an effeminate Pencil. For which Reaſon it was thought expedient to abſtract theſe few Pages from the reſt of the Treatiſe, and to hang them up in the Face of the Nation, as the moſt lively Picture of the Senſuality, Vanity and Treachery, of the Romiſh Profeſſion. The Words themſelves are theſe. In ſhort, ſays he, there is nothing comes nearer in Government to the Divine Perfection, than where the Monarch, as with us, enjoys a Capacity of doing all the Good imaginable to Mankind, under diſabilities to all that is evil.

And as we are thus happy in the Conſtitution of our State, ſo are we yet more bleſſed in that of our Church; being free from that *Romiſh* Yoke, which ſo great a part of Chriſtendom do yet draw and labour under, That Popery is ſuch a thing as cannot, but for want of a Word to expreſs it, be called a Religion: Nor is it to be mentioned with that Civility which is otherwiſe decent to be uſed, in ſpeaking of the Differences of Humane Opinion about Divine Matters. Were it either open Judaiſm, or plain Turkery, or honeſt Paganiſm, there is yet a certain *Bona Fides* in the extravagant Belief, and Sincerity of an erroneous Profeſſion may render it more pardonable: But this is a Compound of all the Three, an extract of whatſoever is moſt Ridiculous and Impious in them, incorporated with more peculiar Abſurdities of its own, in which thoſe were deficient; and all this deliberately contrived, knowingly carried on by the bold Impoſture of Prieſts, under the Name of Chriſtianity. The Wiſdom of this fifth Religion, this laſt and inſolenteſt Attempt upon

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the Credulity of Mankind ſeems to me (though not ignorant otherwiſe of Times, Degrees and Methods of its Progreſs) principally to have conſiſted in their owning the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and the Rule of Faith and Manners, but in prohibiting of the ſame their common Uſe, or the Reading of them in publick Churches, but in a *Latin* Tranſlation to the Vulgar: There being no better or more rational way to fruſtrate the very Deſign of the great Inſtitutor of Chriſtianity, who firſt planted it by the extraordinary Gift of Tongues, than to forbid the uſe even of the ordinary Languages. For having thus a Book, which is univerſally avowed to be of Divine Authority, but Sequeſtring it only into ſuch Hands as were entruſted in the Cheat, they had the Opportunity to Vitiate, Suppreſs or Interpret to their own profit theſe Records by which the poor People hold their Salvation. And this neceſſary Point being once gained, there was thence forward nothing ſo monſtruous to Reaſon, ſo abhorring from Morality, or ſo contrary to Scripture which they might not in prudence adventure on. The Idolatry (for alas it is neither better nor worſe) of Adoring and Praying to Saints and Angels, of Worſhipping Pictures, Images and Reliqs, incredible Miracles and palpable Fables to promot that Veneration. The whole Liturgy and Worſhip of the Bleſſed Virgin. The ſaying of *Pater Noſter's* and Creeds, to the honour of Saints, and of *Ave Mary's* too, not to her honour, but of others. The publick Service, which they can ſpare to God among ſo many Competitors, in an unknown Tongue; and intangled with ſuch Veſtments, Conſecrations, Exorciſms, Whiſperings, Sprinklings, Cenſings and Phantaſtical Rites, Geſticulations, and Removals, ſo unbeſeeming a Chriſtian Office, that it repreſents rather the Pranks and Ceremonies of Juglers and Conjurers, the refuſal of the Cup to the Laity. The neceſſity of the Prieſts Intention to make any of their Sacraments effectual: Debarring their Clergy from Marriage, Interdicting of Meats. Auricular Confeſſion and Abſolution, as with them practiſed. Penances, Pilgrimages, Purgatory and Prayer for the Dead. But

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above all their other Devices, that Tranſubſtantial *Salaciſm*; whereby that glorified Body, which at the ſame time they allow to be in Heaven, is Sold again, and Crucified daily upon all the Altars of their Communion. For, GOD indeed may now and then do a Miracle, but a Romiſh Prieſt can, it ſeems worke in one Moment a Thouſand Impoſſibilities. Thus by a new and Antiſcriptural Belief, compiled of Terrours to the Phanſie, Contradictions to Senſe, and Impoſitions on the underſtanding, their Laity have turned Tenants for their Souls, and in Conſequence Tributary for their Eſtates to a more than Omnipotent Prieſthood.

I muſt indeed do them that Right to avow, that out of equitable Conſideration, and Recompenſe of ſo faithful a Slavery, they have diſcharged the People from all other Services and Dependance, Infranchiſed them from all Duty to God or Man; in ſo much that their ſevereſt and more learned Divines, their Governours of Conſcience, have ſo well inſtructed them in all the Arts of Circumventing their Neighbour, and of Colluding with Heaven; that were the Scholars as apt as their Teachers, there would have been long ſince an end of all either true Piety or common Honeſty; and nothing left among them but authorized Hypocriſie, Licentiouſneſſe and Knavery; had not the natural worth of the better ſort, and the good Simplicity of the Meaner, in great meaſure preſerved them. For nothing indeed, but an extraordinary Temper and Ingenuity of Spirit, and that too aſſiſted by a Divine Influence, could poſſibly reſtrain thoſe within any the Terms or Laws of Humanity, who at the ſame time own the Doctrine of their Caſuits, or the Authority of the Pope, as it is by him claimed and exerciſed. He by his Indulgences delivers Souls out of the pains of the other World: So that who would refuſe to be vicious here, upon ſo good Security. He by his Diſpenſation annuls Contracts betwixt Man and Man, diſſolves Oaths between Princes, or betwixt them and their People, and gives Allowance in Caſes which God and Nature prohibits. He, as Clerk of the Spiritual Market, hath ſet a Rate upon all Crimes: The more flagitious they are and abominable, the better Commodities, and Men pay only an higher price as for greater Rarities. So that it ſeems as if the Commands of God had been invented meerly to erect an Office for the Pope; the worſe Chriſtians Men are, the better Cuſtomers: And this *Rome* does by the ſame policy People its Church, as the Pagan *Rome* did the City, by opening a Sanctuary to all Malefactors. And why not, if his power be indeed of ſuch Vertue and Extent, as is by him challenged? That he is the Ruler over Angels, Purgatory, and Hell. That his Tribunal and Gods are all one. That all that God, he can do, *Clave non errante*, and what he does is as GOD, and not as Man. That he is the Univerſal Head of the Church, the ſole Interpreter of Scripture, and Judge of Controverſie. That he is above General Councils. That his power is Abſolute, and his Decrees infallible. That he can change the very Nature of things, making what is Juſt, to be Unjuſt, and what is Vice to be Vertue, That all Laws are in the Cabinet of his Breaſt. That he can Diſpenſe with the New Teſtament to the great Injury of the Devils. That he is ſtill Monarch of the World, and that he can Diſpoſe of Kingdoms and Empires as he pleaſes; which things being granted, that Stile of *Optimum, Maximum, & Supremum Numen in Terris*, or that of *Dominus Deus noſter, Papa*, was no ſuch extraordinary ſtroke of Courtſhip, as we reckoned; But it was rather a great clownſhneſs in him that treated ſo mighty a Prince under the ſimple

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Title of *Vice Deus*. The Exerciſe of his Dominion is in all poinrs ſuitable to this his pretence. He antiquates the Precepts of Chriſt, as things only of good Advice, not commanded: But makes it a mortal ſin, even to doubt of any part of his own Religion, and Demands, under pain of Damnation, the Subjection of all Chriſtians to his Papal Authority: The denying of two things ſo Reaſonable as blind Obedience to his power, and an Implicit Faith to his Doctrine, being the moſt unpardonable Crime under his diſpenſation. He has indeed of late been ſomewhat more retentive than formerly, as to his Faculty of diſpoſing of Kingdoms, the thing not having ſucceeded well with him in ſome Inſtances; But he lays the ſame claim ſtill, continues the ſame inclination, and though Velvet-Headed hath the more Itch to the puſhing: And however in order to any occaſion, he keeps himſelf in breath always by curſing one Prince or other upon every *Munday*, *Thurſday*: Nor is there any, whether Prince or Nation, that Diſſents from his Uſurpations, but are marked out under the notion of *Hereticks* to Ruine and Deſtruction, whenſoever he ſhall give the Signal. That Word of *Hereſie* miſapplyed, hath ſerved him for ſo many Ages to juſtifie all the Execurions, *Aſſaſſinations*, Wars, Maſſacres and *Devaſtations*, whereby his Faith hath been propogated; of which our Times alſo have not wanted Examples, and more is to be expected for the future. For by how much any thing is more falſe and unreaſonable, it requires more cruelty to eſtabliſh it: *And* to introduce that which is abſurd, there muſt be ſomewhat done that is barbarous, But nothing of any Sect in Religion can be more recommended by all theſe Qualities than the Papacy. The *Pagans* are excuſable by their natural *Darkneſs*, without Revelation. The *Jews* are tolerable, who ſee not beyond the Old Teſtament. *Mahomet* was ſo honeſt as to owne what he would be at, that he himſelf was the greateſt Prophet, and that his was a Religion of the Sword. So that theſe were all, as I may ſay, of another *Allegiance*, and if Enemies, yet no Traytors: But the Pope avowing Chriſtianity by profeſſion, doth in Doctrine and practice renounce it; *And* preſuming to be the only Catholick, does perſecute thoſe to the Death, who dare worſhip the *Author* of their Religion, inſtead of his pretended Vicegerent.

And yet there is nothing more evident, notwithſtanding his moſt notorious Forgeries, and Falſification of all Writers, than that the *Pope* was for ſeveral Hundred Years an honeſt Biſhop, as other Men are, and never ſo much as dreamed upon the ſeven Hills, of that Univerſal power, which he is now come to, Nay, was the firſt that oppoſed any ſuch pretention. But ſome of them, at laſt, growing wiſer, by foiſting a counterfeit Donation of *Conſtantine*, and wreſtling another Donation from our Savlour, advanced themſelves

ſelves in a Weak, Ignorant and Credulous Age, to that Temporal and Spiritual principality that they are now ſeized of; *Tu es Petrus, & ſuper hanc Petram, ædificabo Eccleſiam meam:* Never was a Biſhoprick and a Verſe of Scripture ſo improved by good Management, Thus, by exerciſing in the Quality of *Chriſts Vicar*, the publick Function, under an Inviſible Prince the *Pope*, like the Mayors of the palace, hath ſet his Maſter aſide, and delivered the Government over to a new Line of papal Succeſſion. But who can, unleſs wilfully, be Ignorant what wretched Doings, what Bribery, what Ambition there are, how long the Church is without an Head, upon every Vacancy, till among the Crew of bandying Cardinals, the Holy Ghoſt hath declared for a Pope of the *French* or *Spaniſh* Faction. It is a Succeſſion like that of the *Egyptian Ox* (the living Idol of that Country) who dying, or being made away by the Prieſts; there was a ſolemn and general Mourning, for want of a Deity; until in their Conclave they had found out another Beaſt with the very ſame marks as the former, whom they themſelves adored, and with great Jubelee, brought forth to the people to Worſhip. Nor was that Election a groſſer Reproach to Humane Reaſon than this is alſo to Chriſtianity. Surely it is the greateſt Miracle of the Romiſh Church, that it ſhould ſtill continue, and that in all the Time the Gates of Heaven ſhould not prevail againſt it.

It is almoſt unconceivable, how Princes can yet ſuffer a power ſo pernicious, and Doctrine ſo deſtructive to all Government. That ſo great a part of the Land ſhould be alienated and condemned too, as they call it, pious Uſes. That ſuch millions of their people, as the Clergy, ſhould, by remaining unmarried, either fruſtrate Humane Nature, if they live chaſtly, or, if otherwiſe, adulterate it. That they ſhould be priviledged from all Labour, and publick ſervice; and exempt from the power of all Secular Juriſdiction. That they, being all bound by ſtrict Oaths and Vows of Obedience to the *Pope*, ſhould evacuate the Fealty due to the Soveraign. Nay, that not only the Clergy, but the whole people, if of the *Romiſh perſwaſion*, ſhould be obliged to rebel at any time upon the *Popes* pleaſure. And yet how many of the neighbouring princes are content, or do chuſe to reign upon thoſe Conditions; which being ſo diſhonourable and dangerous, ſurely ſome great and more weighty Reaſon does cauſe them ſubmit. Whether it be out of perſonal Fear, having heard perhaps of ſeveral Attempts which the blind Obedience of *Popiſh Zelots* hath executed againſt their Princes. Or, whether aiming at a more abſolute and tyrranical Government, they think it ſtill to be the Caſe of *Boniface* and *Phocas* (an uſurping Emperour, and an uſurping Biſhop) and that, as other Cheats, this alſo is beſt to be managed by Confederacy.

But, as far as I can apprehend, there is more of Sloth than policy on the Princes ſide in this whole matter: And all that pretence of inſlaving Men, by the aſſiſtance of Religion more eaſily, is neither more nor leſs, than when the Braminie, *by having the firſt night of the Bride, aſſures himſelf of her Devotion for the future, and makes her more fit for the Huſband.*

FINIS.